

Updated Proposal for the Permanent Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention in Bratislava, Slovak Republic

Introduction

Slovakia as a country with more than 71 % of its surface lying in the Carpathian Mountains region and sharing about 22 % of the whole Carpathians represents with its 9 National Parks, 14 Protected Landscape Areas, 4 Biosphere Reserves, and about 44 other categories of protected areas over 100 ha a substantial part of the Carpathian Network of Protected Areas. Slovakia has actively contributed to the development and establishment of the network and already few years ago offered to support the Carpathian Convention and the Carpathian Network of Protected Areas with its experience, specialists, expertise and coordination work. The Government of the Slovak Republic represented by the Ministry of Environment submits its updated proposal for Permanent Secretariat to the Carpathian Convention Implementation Committee.

Part I

Legal framework

The Permanent Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention will be located in Bratislava. The assistance of the Slovak Government is based in support of the premises Permanent Secretariat on the territory of the Slovak Republic and in technical support by the staff members of the State Nature Conservancy of the Slovak Republic (SNC).

1.1 General provisions on privileges, immunities and social security that would be conferred on the permanent arrangement for the CNPA and its staff members, family members/dependents of the staff, representatives of the CNPA Steering Committee, delegates and experts invited to the meetings and conferences in the Host Country of the Permanent Secretariat CC:

- a. Immunity from jurisdiction*
- b. Inviolability of the premises, archives, samples, equipment, and other material*
- c. Freedom of financial assets from restrictions*
- d. Facilities and immunities in respect of communications (e.g. uses of code/sealed bag/radio transmission) and publications*
- e. Exemption from taxes and customs duties*
- f. Social security aspects*

All the issues concerning the privileges and immunities specified in a) to e) can be guaranteed for the Permanent Secretariat, its staff members, family members, representatives of the Contracting Parties and other subjects as will be specified in the multilateral treaty with the Convention Contracting Parties. This treaty can also confer the privileges and immunities over the frame specified in a) to e) and the exemption of the Permanent Secretariat employees from the frame of internal regulations on social insurance and related contributions specified under f).

1.2 Rules, including any restrictions, applicable to the employment of family members/dependants of staff members.

The internal legislation, on the basis of principle of reciprocity, allows to the family members of the international governmental organization staff members acting on the territory of the Slovak Republic to be employed in the territory of the Slovak Republic without the working permit (Act

No. 5/2004 Coll.). The possibility of the family member employment without the working permit is linked to the duration of the employers occupational relationship of the international governmental organization located in the Slovak territory. The family member of the employee of the Management Unit could relate to general provisions for the employment of foreigners (Act No. 5/2004 Coll.). The employment acceptance of the foreigner by the employer located on the Slovak Republic territory is under the condition of working permit.

The international treaty could set out subsequent legal regulation within the Slovak internal legislation for the employment of the family members of employees of the Permanent Secretariat.

1.3. Nature of the headquarters agreement

E.g. stand-alone agreement, incorporated into another existing agreement, etc.

The hosting of the Permanent Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention could be established and institutionalised by an international (presidential) treaty, which will be subject for approval by the National Council of the Slovak Republic and ratification of the President of the Slovak Republic.

1.4 Social Security aspects.

The exemption of the Permanent Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention employees from the frame of internal regulations on social insurance and related contributions could be subject of the international treaty with the Contracting Parties of the Convention.

Part II

Features of the office site and related financial issues

2.1. Main features of the building to house the Permanent Secretariat CC, including office space, facilities for conferences and availability of general services (security, maintenance, parking garages, cafeteria, restaurant, etc.).

The historical building planed as office for permanent secretariat is one from office building owned by Government of the Slovak Republic in the very centre of the Bratislava.

After reconstruction of the building is now a one floor for office. It offers office rooms, 1 meeting room for 30 people and storage rooms. The space provides kitchen and toilets. The building is secured with an alarm system. The entrance is equipped with the telephone and remote opening system. The building not disposes its own closed parking place. The prepaid parking places in the surroundings of the building are in underground parking very centre of the town.

The building itself does not have its own cafeteria or a restaurant. The number and variety of restaurants and cafes are available in the close surrounding of the building, as far as it is located in the very centre of the town, in walking distance, offering diverse foods and drinks of national and international cuisine. Preparation of coffee, tea or snacks is possible in the kitchen.

2.2. Basis for placing the office facilities at the disposal of the Permanent Secretariat CC:

Ownership - by the host Government of the Slovak Republic without a rent to be paid by the permanent secretariat (it includes rooms, water, heating, electricity, gas, cleaning, sewage, waste disposal, maintenance).

2.3. Who will have a responsibility for:

- a. *Major maintenance and repairs to the office facilities* - by the Ministry of the Environment

of the Slovak Republic.

- b. *Normal maintenance and repair and Utilities, including communication facilities* – a service man and IT administrator of the home administration will have the responsibility for normal maintenance and repair. Specialized repairs and maintenance of the Permanent Secretariat's facilities will be under responsibility of the Secretariat. Possible expenses will be for: office equipment, Office supplies, telephone, ISDN, fax.

Please, indicate possible expenses to be paid by the Permanent Secretariat CC.

The salary of the Co and his Assistant should be covered from the core budget of the Carpathian Convention, from the membership fees, voluntary contributions of the Contracting Parties and projects. Possible expenses of the CNPA Management Unit will be for: travel expenses, office equipment, office supplies, telephone, ISDN, fax.

2.4. *To which extent the office facilities would be furnished and equipped by the Host Government?*

Will your offer include the provision free-of charge of the following items:

- a. *office furniture:* Yes, standard furniture.
- b. *office equipment:* No, the Permanent Secretariat CC should supply technical equipment (computers, fax, printing and copy machines, etc.).
- c. *office supplies:* No, the Permanent Secretariat CC should pay for office supplies (paper, toners...).
- d. *public utilities (e.g. gas/water/sewage/electricity/waste disposal):* Yes, these will be free-of charge.
- e. *lines of communication (telephone/ISDN/fax/computer network/telephone centre of the house/wiring):* Computer network and wiring is already available in the rooms, the permanent secretariat will be responsible for covering telecommunication expenses (phone, ISDN, fax).
- f. *security equipment/security zone equipment:* Yes.
- g. *conference equipment including interpretation system:*
Yes - meeting room in the building (for 30 people), beamer and slide projector will be available;
No - interpretation system (not available)

MoE offers rooms with public utilities and lines of communication (for telephone, fax, computer network, wiring, internet connection through microwave antenna 1 Mb/sec) at disposal. Specialists and technical staff of the MoE can support the work of the permanent secretariat.

2.5. *Please, specify the duration of the arrangements regarding office space.*

The space should be available in January 2012 for not limited time span.

Part III

Local facilities and conditions

3.1. Short general overview of the town/city and region features

- a. Population figure;*
- b. Territory total area;*

Short general description of the city/region features

Bratislava is the capital of Slovakia and, with a population of about 446000, also the country's largest city. Bratislava is in southwestern Slovakia on both banks of the Danube River. Bordering Austria and Hungary, it is the only national capital that borders two independent countries. Bratislava and Vienna are two of the closest European national capitals to each other.

Bratislava is the political, cultural, and economic centre of Slovakia. It is the seat of the Slovak president, the parliament, and the executive branch of the government. It is home to several universities, museums, theatres, galleries and other important cultural and educational institutions. Many of Slovakia's large businesses and financial institutions are also headquartered there.

Bratislava is situated in south-western Slovakia, within the Bratislava Region. Its location on the borders with Austria and Hungary makes it the only national capital that borders two countries. It is only 62 kilometers from the border with the Czech Republic and only 60 kilometers from the Austrian capital Vienna.

The city has a total area of 367.58 square kilometers, making it the second-largest city in Slovakia by area (after the township of Vysoké Tatry). Bratislava straddles the Danube River, which crosses the city from the west to the south-east. The Middle Danube basin begins at Devín Gate in western Bratislava. Other rivers are the Morava River, which forms the north-western border of the city and enters the Danube at Devín, the Little Danube, and the Vydrlica, which enters the Danube in the borough of Karlova Ves.

The Carpathian mountain range begins in city territory with the Little Carpathians (*Malé Karpaty*). The Záhorie and Danubian lowlands stretch into Bratislava. The city's lowest point is at the Danube's surface at 126 meters AMSL, and the highest point is Devínska Kobyla at 514 meters. The average altitude is 140 meters.

Climate

Bratislava lies in the north temperature zone and has a continental climate with four distinct seasons. It is often windy with a marked variation between hot summers and cold, humid winters. The city is in one of the warmest and driest parts of Slovakia. Recently, the transitions from winter to summer and summer to winter have been rapid, with short autumn and spring periods. Snow occurs less frequently than previously. Some areas, particularly Devín and Devínska Nová Ves, are vulnerable to floods from the Danube and Morava rivers. New flood protection is being built on both banks.

3.2. Description of the following facilities and conditions:

- a. Diplomatic representation in the host city/region*

All diplomatic representations are in Bratislava.

- b. Presence of NGOs relevant to the Convention in the city/region*

Several tens of environmental NGOs and foundations are active there, e.g.

- Daphne, REC Slovakia, SOS, Birds Life SK, Greenpeace...
 - Slovak Environmental Agency (SEA), regional office
 - State Nature Conservancy (SNC), regional office
 - Slovak Water Management Company, branch Administration of the Danube River Basin
 - Slovak Hydrometeorological Institute
 - Regional and district environmental authorities
 - Slovak Environmental Inspection
- c. Presence of universities/institutes/academies/research institutions in the city/region;
- Technical University Bratislava
 - Comenius University Bratislava
 - SAV Bratislava – Slovak Academy of Sciences

d. *Availability of international conference facilities and the conditions for their use (free of charge, rental, etc.);*

There are technical, organizational, personal and spatial assumes for conferences and other activities on the international level. There is a guarantee of special capability and of personal representation of specialists (research institutes and universities).

e. *International and local transport facilities (air, train, bus connection; local urban transport facilities) with detailed information on connection with capital cities of the Parties, actual travel expenses, overall travel time and transport time schedule. Telecommunication facilities.*

Airport M.R.Štefánik Bratislava – currently there are international connections.

Railway connection, bus international connection

- Bratislava – Vienna (60 km) (international airport)
- Bratislava - B. Bystrica (200 km)
- Bratislava - Budapest - (193 km) (international airport)
- Bratislava – Praha (323 km)
- Bratislava – Warsaw (625 km)
- Bratislava – Bucharest (1079 km)

Complex telecommunication services available, including mobile phone providers (3 companies operating), wireless internet connection available.

Transport availability from Bratislava is from the Airport M.R.Štefánik or from Schwechat Vienna Airport and on the motorways and train in all directions. All train and bus transport time schedules are available on www.cp.sk.

Local urban transport is provided by tram, buses and trolleybuses. There is a good system of local transport in the town. The office is situated in the very centre of the city, so local transport facilities are easy accessible (5-20 min. to the urban transport stops, railway station and bus station).

f. *Local availability of trained personnel for possible support of the Permanent Secretariat CC, taking account of language and other skills*

Professional staff of the State Nature Conservancy of the Slovak Republic (SNC), and other specialists from other Administrations can be of help and available for necessary technical assistance for the permanent secretariat. The SNC is the central national governmental

organisation for nature conservation and management, governing all state protected areas (with 11 Regional Centres, altogether 25 units/protected areas administrations). Complex university education with qualification in language knowledge, natural history, ecology, forestry, economy and political sciences and international relations is available there. The big advantage of the location is availability of all these specialised, scientific, university and academic institutions which can be of help in various aspects of the permanent secretariat.

g. *Health facilities and access to them by staff members of the permanent secretariat*

There is the Faculty Hospital in Bratislava which is the one from biggest hospital in Slovakia, with a high quality service. There is also a good network of private health care service and pharmacies available. Health resorts in spas near Bratislava (Piešťany) offer short-term and long-term curative sojourns.

h. *Availability of suitable housing and the proximity of this housing to the office facilities at the disposal of the Permanent Secretariat CC*

There are a lot of possibilities of accommodation – hotels (apartments), guest houses, pensions or flats in the new apartment houses at disposal for rent in proximity 10-15 min on foot or by car from the office. Well developed housing market offers a big number and selection of family houses, villas and flats in the city or its vicinity for sell.

Other pensions can offer also cheaper accommodation.

Shopping centres include Tesco Stores, Kaufland, Billa, Lidl, Coop, new modern complex facilities and local stores facilities.

i. *Availability of schools at all levels, including those providing classes in languages other than the local language*

- Several kindergartens; *Primary schools* – with language classes; *Secondary schools and Gymnasiums* – including bilingual
- at all schools English or German languages are taught
-

j. *Facilities for the transfer of funds to and from foreign countries for the Permanent Secretariat CC and its staff members*

There are branches of several bank institutions of the Slovak Republic and some international banks. International bank transfers are realizable in all banks in the town (Tatrabanka, VUB, Slovenská sporiteľňa, OTP, ČSOB, UniCredit Bank, Banka Slovakia, Dexia Banka...).

k. *The time needed for processing entry requirements and ability to ensure that participants in meetings organized by the Permanent Secretariat CC in the territory of the Host Government are granted visa entry permits, where necessary, in expeditious manner*

Visa entry permits are not requested for EU member states and most of other European countries, as well as holders of diplomatic and official passports from Serbia and Ukraine. Processing of entry requirements can take few days and the Slovak authorities will be supportive in ensuring that visa entry permits are granted to participants from respective countries on time.